

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 24 and 30, and add new claims 33 and 34, as set forth in the listing of claims that follows:

Listing of Claims

1-23 (Canceled)

24. (Currently Amended) The catalytic converter subassembly of Claim 30, wherein said catalytic converter shell is fixedly disposed within said manifold wall recess such that said catalytic converter shell is locked into position within said manifold wall to form a gas tight seal therebetween.

25. (Previously Presented) The catalytic converter subassembly of Claim 30, wherein said manifold wall comprises a manifold wall thickness greater than a catalytic converter shell thickness of said catalytic converter shell.

26. (Previously Presented) The catalytic converter subassembly of Claim 25, wherein said manifold wall thickness is 3 mm to 4 mm, and said catalytic converter shell thickness is 1mm to 2 mm.

27. (Previously Presented) The catalytic converter subassembly of Claim 30, wherein said catalytic converter shell is cast within an end of said manifold wall.

28. (Previously Presented) The catalytic converter subassembly of Claim 30, wherein said portion of said catalytic converter shell comprises a retention feature selected from the group consisting of bumps, flares, grooves, and any combination comprising at least one of the foregoing.

29. (Previously Presented) The catalytic converter subassembly of Claim 30, wherein said manifold comprises cast iron and said catalytic converter shell comprises stainless steel.

30. (Currently Amended) A catalytic converter subassembly comprising:

an exhaust manifold comprising a manifold wall including a thickened section defining an outlet port;

at least one recess formed in said wall substantially concentrically circumscribing said outlet port;

a catalytic converter shell, wherein ~~a~~ an end portion of said catalytic converter shell is disposed within said manifold wall recess to effect a seal therebetween;

a catalyst substrate disposed in said catalytic converter shell;

a mat support material disposed between said catalytic converter shell and said catalyst substrate; and

a mat protection ring disposed substantially concentrically within said shell and including opposed first and second ends, wherein ~~a first portion~~ said first end of said mat protection ring is disposed in said manifold wall recess and ~~a second portion~~ the second end of said mat protection ring penetrates at least a portion of said mat support material ~~at one end~~.

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Cancelled)

33. (New) The catalytic converter subassembly of claim 30, wherein said at least one recess comprises at least one blind recess including inner and outer radially spaced sidewalls closed by a bottom wall.

34. (New) The catalytic converter subassembly of claim 30, wherein said at least

one recess comprises concentric, radially spaced inner and outer recesses wherein said catalytic converter shell end portion is disposed within said outer recess and the first end of said mat protection ring is disposed in said inner recess.